

PLAN FOR A NEW MUSEUM
JOHN COTTON DANA

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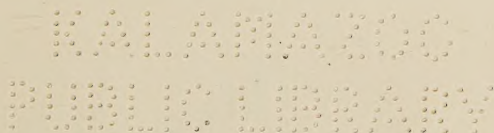
The Kind of Museum it Will Profit
a City to Maintain

By John Cotton Dana

No. 4 of the New Museum Series



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INTRODUCTION

I read a paper on "Increasing the Usefulness of Museums" at the meeting of the American Association of Museums, May, 1916, in Washington, D. C., and it was printed in the proceedings of that Association.

Although a few of the suggestions and criticisms here set forth were presented in that paper, this book is more than a revision of it. I have rewritten it and added to it further suggestions of my own and others from the museum literature of the past three years.

It is now much less a prophecy and much more a record than it was when it was read in first draft to a group of museum workers. The suggestion that museums should be of definite value to the communities which maintain them is now quite generally accepted, and is being worked out in practice as rapidly, perhaps, as the indifference of the public, the conservatism of trustees and the incubus of expertness will permit.

This is the fourth of a series of small volumes on museums that I have written in recent years; volumes that I must frankly admit are little more than essays. I have published them at my own expense, partly to please myself and partly because I found they were not acceptable to publishers of either books or journals. Elsewhere I have given a brief statement of how they came to be written.

In May, 1919, I read a paper to the trustees of the Newark Museum Association, which was afterwards published as a pamphlet with the title "The New Relations of Museums and Industries — the Story of the first ten years of a group of Experimental Museums." In an appendix to this paper was included a

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brief summary of the activities of the Newark Museums. This summary tries to make emphatic my feeling that all museum work is to-day experimental, and should be frankly regarded as such, even by those who are developing and managing our largest and richest museums. A glance at a "Summary" in that pamphlet will show that we have here in Newark, in a very modest way, made trial of many of the forms of activity mentioned in this volume. This fact does not prove that those forms of activity are fundamentally good; it does show that they can be carried out, and, by so much, shows that my mention of them, and of others akin to them, is based on more than imagination.

J. C. D.

Newark New Jersey
June 1920

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A Plan for a Useful Museum

A Record and a Prophecy

It is easy for a museum to get objects; it is hard for a museum to get brains. The objects are seen, talked about, wondered at and bring praise to those who give them and prestige to those who choose them for purchase. The brains are not seen, are chiefly in the heads of hirelings, produce results slowly, and the results produced are seen only by those with a gift for education or with training and experience in it. But, objects do not make a "museum;" they merely form a "collection."

What is true of museum objects,—rare, wonder-producing and pride-evoking objects,—is true also of museum buildings. It is easy to get them, much easier than to get museum brains. They are large, monumental, obtrusive, make impressive photographs, help to give cities plausible reasons for existence, furnish to donors a refined publicity for unselfish expenditures and endow laborious trustees with a sense of duty done and with the immortality of bronze tablets. But a building of the kind that is usually constructed to house a museum, is not in itself a museum; it is almost always a storehouse for "collections."

Probably no more useless public institution, useless relatively to its cost, was ever devised than that popular ideal, the classical building of a museum of art, filled with rare and costly objects. And it adds to its inutility a certain power for harm. To its community it gives a specious promise of artistic regeneration, and it permits those who visit it to put on certain integuments of

culture which, although they do not conceal esthetic nakedness, inhibit the free exercise of both intellect and sensibility.

What I mean is this: Museums, and especially art museums, are social conventions or community fashions. When a city puts on a museum it puts it on in obedience to the dictates of municipal fashion; it erects a museum building in accordance with current architectural fashion; and it places in the building objects selected after the fashion of art museums. These municipal, architectural and museum-object fashions are becoming out of date. Conformity to them is not useful, but moderately harmful and gives to conformists the notion that they are doing something which in fact they are not doing.

To conform to all these things is easy, as is all conformity. To get brains into museums is difficult, because brains object to mere conformity; brains criticize fashions and promote those unusual activities which are so painful, after the universal laws of neophobia, to almost all good citizens and especially to prominent and wealthy ones.

If, now, museums are to be of greater use to the world, here are the things that museum brains must fight against:—fashionable museum buildings, fashionable museum collections and fashionable treatment of collections.

And here are the things they must fight for:—the making of such collections, and the construction of such buildings, and the employment of persons of such skill, and the granting to those persons such powers and liberties as will compel the collections, the buildings and the staffs all to work together for the pleasure, the education and the profit of their respective communities.

In the kind of conflict here indicated,—brains and ideas against the inborn tendency of good citizens to prefer the old ways,—the better manner of conducting the campaign is plainly that of seeming retreat, accompanied by the construction of new

and better things in the peace and quiet of the rear. That is to say, the advocates of the type of museum described in this volume must work for the most part in the obscurity and gloom of the old-fashioned museum temple; and there must awaken the embalmed bodies of the sacred "collections" and put them at useful tasks. Then, when the cohorts of the ancient, honorable and ignorant finally penetrate the lines of the intelligent and reach the rearguard, they will find there, already constructed and in use, institutions so well adapted to obvious needs that they will adopt them at once, and call them their own creations and the very realizations of the ideals for which they so long have fought!

That which common-sense dictates as the proper course for propagandists of the new museum, is precisely the course which they are following. Here and there are men and women, relatively few but in the total a goodly number, who are constructing institutions of a usefulness so great that they are paying in some cases fair returns on their cost, even though burdened with the handicap of being called museums.

Three museum studies have been made by Paul M. Rea, who is the Director of the Museum of Charleston, S. C., and Secretary of the Association of American Museums, and appeared in the annual reports of the U. S. Commission of Education for 1913, 1914 and 1915. These very valuable studies are quite discouraging if one looks only at results as set down in cold figures. They are quite cheering if one reads between their lines and considers them with an eye to the future.

The study of the educational work of museums made in 1914 by Miss Louise Connolly, educational expert of the Newark, N. J., museums, is of necessity more optimistic, being frankly an effort at construction rather than a description of conditions. The recent annual reports of the American Association of Museums

can give even the most depressed of museum revolutionists much encouragement; for they show that the one ever-present desire of many museum workers is to discover and exploit new avenues of definite usefulness.

I shall try to suggest this rapid increase in the usefulness of museums by drawing, from latter day writings, reports of those forms of museum activities in which progressive museum workers take the most pride, making the museums in which they appear more widely and more definitely useful to their respective communities. These varied forms of activity I shall unite in one imaginary museum, which, as I shall try to suggest, has for its community a certain definite and clearly understood value. In thus depicting, in rough and incomplete outline, an institution of an excellence and effectiveness as yet unattained, I add to it certain features and put upon it certain peculiarities born of my own imagination. Only thus, it seems, can I give the vision a certain needed fullness.

Those things which the new museum will not do, and the kind of institution which it will distinctly not be, must be indicated chiefly by exclusion. It is not needful to begin by saying that the ideal institute of visual instruction will not be thus and so. One negation, however, seems essential; it is that the new museum is not a museum of a certain kind. It is not of fine art, or applied art; or of all sciences, or of any special science; or of industry or commerce; or of pedagogy or technology; or of hygiene or religion. Carefully selected and laboriously identified, completely labeled, fitly installed and safely housed collections of objects in each of the fields mentioned, and in many others, are needed now, and have now and always will have their select, high and usually narrow range of usefulness. But basic to all the project I here set forth is the statement that either these must no longer be called museums, but "collections;" or, a new name

must be discovered,—such a name I suggest in “institute of visual instruction”—and applied to those creations whose usefulness is wide, direct, obvious and in fair degree measurable. And that word measurable leads to one more remark prefatory.

All public institutions, and museums are not exceptions to this rule, should give returns for their cost; and those returns should be in good degree positive, definite, visible, measurable. The goodness of a museum is not in direct ratio to the cost of its building and the upkeep thereof, or to the rarity, auction-value or money cost of its collections. A museum is good only in so far as it is of use.

It is easy to evade the importance of this obvious fact by airy talk of the uplift value of architectural facades in the classic manner, of priceless antiquities, of paintings by masters and of ancient porcelains, jades and lacquers, to say nothing of replicas and habitats of whales, Indians and mastodons. But the evasion does not serve. Common sense demands that a publicly supported institution do something for its supporters, and that some part at least of what it does be capable of clear description and downright valuation.

The museum project I present is assumed to be part of and to be supported by one of our large, ugly, industrious and rich American cities of mixed population. I select this special environment for many quite obvious reasons; but chiefly because a museum of the type I shall describe can in the environment suggested find a maximum of usefulness.

The main building is near the center of the daily movement of the citizens. It ought not to be necessary to say that an institution which is supported partly or wholly by taxation, and is thus supported that it may give, and because it is supported does in fact give, pleasure and profit to all citizens, should stand where all citizens can most easily reach it. But again and again

the plea is made for the choice of a certain museum site that it is, or in time will be, near the "center of population." It is difficult, apparently, for the old-fashioned museum mind to grasp the fact that "center of population" and "center of daily movement of population" are not one and the same.

The reasons usually given for placing a museum in an isolated building, preferably in a park, and for causing it to be designed in the classic manner, all with the general spiritual uplift of the passing citizen in view, have heretofore quite universally won over our museum trustees. That the usefulness of an institution which is primarily intended to be visited is directly proportioned to the number of its visitors, and that this number is directly proportioned to its accessibility—these are facts that have found a very difficult entrance to the museum mind.

The building's narrow and modestly decorated entrance fronts on a side street, just off a main artery of travel.

It is sixteen stories high, with an area of about 10,000 square feet on each floor, giving a total of 160,000 above the basement. It is constructed in the ordinary modern, fireproof, brick-steel-and-concrete manner.

The general floor plan need not be described as it must in good measure conform to the land purchased for it. The lighting problem is solved largely by electricity; though windows are abundant, especially in work rooms.

The entrance hall, a stairway of moderate grandeur, cloak rooms, toilets, shipping rooms, and several small halls of wonders and several lecture rooms occupy most of the first floor. The halls of wonders contain a few oil paintings, sculptures and curios such as every museum of art is supposed to possess; and a few of the habitat groups, large skeletons, and curiosities of nature which convention bids us look for in a museum of science. If these were not on view in a convenient place and near

the entrance, they would be earnestly and persistently sought for by visitors until they were found. By putting them near the entrance, and by giving the entrance just a touch of grandeur, all visitors who have the conventional museum expectancy enjoy at once the agreeable reactions they look for, and are fit to proceed further in a quiet and receptive mind,—or to withdraw from the building! Many of these objects, or others akin to them, are found again where needed to teach this, that and the other lesson, according to the museum's general scheme of instruction.

Always among the objects shown in these halls of wonders are some which are recent acquisitions, some which cost a great deal of money, some which enjoy provenances of astonishing lengths and of aristocratic flavor, and several which are the only ones in the world, or at least in this country.

The modesty of the entrance hall is compensated for in part by the presence in it of a panel of glass mosaic, very unusual, very expensive, very elaborately made, very old, very historical and distinctly a museum piece.

The suggestions in the last paragraphs are not intended to be satirical or merely humorous. The traditional conception of a museum is very deeply set in the minds of our people, rich and poor, ignorant and cultivated. A museum which did not conform in some degree to this traditional conception would hardly win the approval of the voters as something worth adding to the city's equipment; and, when in operation, would not for years win the approval of the common people who must vote for its income or its treasures. Nor are the suggestions in this paragraph merely supported by an appeal to popular though mistaken conventions. There is a certain value to a community in the knowledge that it is living up to the traditions of its kind. Indeed, if money were abundant, either from gifts or from appropriations of unexpected size, some of it could quite properly be spent in giving

a museum building more room, and in making it more ornate than I have suggested. The chief points in the museum conception I am here setting forth are that it must be central and useful. It quite clearly follows then that it must, unless its income is very large, be simple, and tall and not greatly supplied with objects of high cost.

The floors on which are found the other things to be mentioned need not be specified. For all objects and activities there is abundant space. Many are moved from time to time, as the development of the museum's activities and as changes in museum method dictate.

I do not attempt to say with any degree of definiteness what kind of a structure and what arrangement of rooms an active, growing institute of visual instruction needs. No one knows. We have not, as I have said, even demonstrated that the best of museums is worth the money it costs. We can, on the contrary, almost prove that the conventional, "gazing", "art-gallery" type of museum does not give such returns in pleasure or betterment of any kind as justify its existence; even though it gives good ocular evidence of its city's power of indulgence in conspicuous waste. We are trying to find a type of museum which demonstrably pays its community fair interest on its investment. As to its housing, we can only be sure as yet of two things; first, that like any institution dependent on public use for adequate returns for founding and upkeep, it must be where its supporting public can most easily and most cheaply reach it; that is, it must be near the center of daily movement of population; and, second, that it must have all the floor space the money to be put into it will give. This floor space can be gained to-day, under modern city conditions, near a city's center only by making the building tall. Following on these two self-evident propositions come the facts, based on our ignorance of the future of museums, that this

floor space must not be definitely assigned to definite purposes ; but must be capable, having the fewest possible permanent partitions, of rearrangement almost to the last degree.

What the building may contain and what are the activities which may center in it must be told in outline only. To those familiar with modern museum work the items which follow will almost automatically expand themselves.

The staff, which is adequate for the work the objects named and the activities suggested may require, is larger, relatively to size of building and cost of collections, and more highly paid, than it is in any existing museum of equal floor-space. The large salary roll is compensated for in part by a very moderate expenditure for objects, by dues paid by certain classes of students, by payments for certain definite commercial and industrial services rendered, and, if admission is charged on special days or to special exhibits, by entrance fees. Moreover, the obvious and the definitely proven usefulness of the museum does, in due course, reconcile its supporters to its cost.

The quality of the staff and the special talents and the experience and skill of its members are indicated by the statements which follow of the things they are expected to do. For much of the more important work of the institute most museum workers of conventional experience and training will not be fitted. For this work it will be necessary to engage persons whose opinions of what a museum should be are quite loosely held, and whose susceptibility to new ideas and powers of initiation are quite marked. More is said on this subject later.

Of paintings there are many, chiefly recent American, but with an abundance of copies of old masterpieces. A few are shown in the building ; some are lent to schools ; some are placed in windows of stores ; some are in libraries and branch libraries and some are in museum branches. Most are without frames, and

for storage are slipped into shallow boxes of uniform size which stand on end on racks like books on a shelf. For showing these there is a collection of extremely simple frames of many sizes. The museum acquires a minimum number of those products of aesthetic aberration, elaborate gold frames.

As already stated, a few examples from the collection of paintings are on view in one or more galleries, except when the galleries are needed for other purposes.

One painting at least is almost always in view in a small special room. Visitors to this room are expected to be seated in chairs provided for the purpose and to study the painting for some time. As an aid to such study a leaflet descriptive of the painting and explanatory of its assumed excellences is given to all who wish it.

A like use is made of many of the paintings which are lent, they being suitably placed, lighted, and accompanied by seats. In the center of the city and in parts of the city where the poorer citizens have their homes, advantage is taken of opportunities to engage vacant stores, small halls and even rooms in private houses. In each of these a good painting is set up for a week or a month, and the place is opened, with an intelligent person in charge, for an hour or two each day and evening.

This plan of showing single paintings is followed, not because paintings have a very high value as promoters of happiness, as teachers of facts, as aids to forming good habits or as founts of inspiration; but because this is the period of the oil painting, because some knowledge of the history of its development and some acquaintance with the most prized examples is good mental baggage, and, particularly, because by this plan the average lover of painted pictures gets more out of them than he does in any other way.

The "Stories of Paintings" that are printed for distribution

at these "one painting" exhibits are usually illustrated with a picture of the painting, sometimes in color. Some of these leaflets, written with special reference to the purpose, are used as reading texts in schools, and, when possible, the painting which the leaflet thus used describes is placed for a time where the class which is reading the leaflet can see and study it.

A plan almost identical with this is followed in the use of bronzes, large and small, copies and originals; of plaster casts; of prints, including especially those in color; of reproductions of paintings in color, both the expensive and the cheap; of wood carving; of brocades, and of many other kinds of museum objects. In the case of the smaller and less story-full objects, more than one article is sometimes shown at a time; though the very special value of a careful and undistracted study of one thing is never forgotten.

The sculptures include many American bronzes, with others of all countries and all times, the latter being in most cases inexpensive copies. Most of these are usually stored, or lent, or are on exhibition in other places. There is no grand sculpture hall of plaster casts; though there is at least one room in which may be aroused the peculiar aesthetic emotion to be experienced in the presence of a congruous group of marble sculpture. Some casts are colored in the ancient manner. Some of the larger pieces are set up, for a few months, in schools, and in other places as noted in detail under paintings. Small casts for the use of students are many in number and lent freely. Large use is made of plaster copies in small size of important sculptures. Groups of these, skilfully arranged and properly lighted, are found particularly useful for work outside the building.

Such of the objects of applied or decorative art as are purchased are largely copies. The acquisition in this field, even by gift, of ancient, rare and costly originals which have a very high

market value and involve great labor in handling and great care for preservation, is not encouraged, especially if with them goes the condition that they be constantly shown. Even if they are always on view, such things take up much valuable space; while the labor of handling and storing them and showing them occasionally is, in view of their value and fragility, very great. As is indicated under other items, the products of American workers are especially sought in this field; the products of individual artisans with private shops and of employes in large establishments being both regarded as quite honorable.

The collection of prints is large but not very expensive. Valuable prints are accepted as gifts, but few are purchased. No large permanent collection is always in view.

A constant effort is made to humanize the print. As a mere story-picture the print, in the form of a reproduction of a pencil, pen or wash drawing, is everywhere present and has a universal appeal. It is difficult to discover the reason why the print proper, the first-hand product of a man of genius and of exquisite skill, is entirely without interest to all save a very small part of even the more educated and experienced. Our museum tries to change this state of things. Good prints are lent, accompanied by notes descriptive of origin, character and points of special interest. As in the descriptive leaflets on single paintings or pieces of sculpture, these print-leaflets often dwell much on the print's content, its mere story, and pass from that to the reasons for its special appeal to students. And all this is frequently accompanied by illustrations and by objects which help to make clear the methods by which any given print was produced.

In connection with the remarks on paintings and prints and inexpensive copies thereof, it is proper to consider that fashion of the time which gives a very high value to originals in every field of art, handicraft and design. A copy of a great painting, for

example, even though it be so perfect that at a distance of a few feet not one person in ten thousand can tell that it is a copy, is looked upon as a dangerous foe of art and as an almost blasphemous tour-de-force. Still lower in the scale of being are photo-mechanical reproductions of paintings and prints, and pictures in color and black and white of textiles, laces, wood carvings and other objects, even though these convey to the intelligent observer a very correct impression of the design, color and technique of the originals.

The fashion is very injurious; for, being set and followed by the elect in the art world,—wealthy collectors, dealers, museum experts and critics—it is naturally followed by the commonalty, inhibits their powers of observation and comparison and leads them to feel that if they do not look upon “originals” they can make little or no progress in their education in art. It does more than this:—it tends to prevent the would-be designer from making full use of the countless admirable pictures of art works of every period and country which lie open to his hands. In Paris is an art museum containing no objects of art whatsoever. It is merely a collection of pictures, wide in its range, and classed by objects depicted and by the period and country from which the originals come. Our museums would do well to copy this artless plan. Whether they do or not, the plan is being in a measure forced upon us by the printing press, as is noted later.

Of paintings, sculptures and other objects in the field of the fine arts, so called, the museum finds it wise, as already noted, to secure, but chiefly by gift, a few honorific originals; originals, that is, of high market value, greatly esteemed by collectors and connoisseurs, and giving to the institution a certain distinction. In the present state of art appreciation these objects gain newspaper notice, attract an occasional student and stimulate an occasional donor to add other like objects to them.

A like policy is pursued as to objects in the applied art field.

But it is not forgotten that the chief reason why the authorities of our projected museum secure and label and set into view any given object is not to evoke wonder in the casual observer, or to arouse the admiration and pride of fellow citizens or the astonishment and envy of citizens of other cities.

In the field of art, where the discussion for the moment finds us, our institute secures and displays and describes and lends objects, in the hope that they may produce certain rather definite effects on those who see them, handle them, study them and in any manner make use of them. It hopes that these objects will increase the local interest in the art of adapting objects to their specific useful purposes, in the ornamentation of useful objects, in the history of developments and changes in that ornamentation, in current methods of ornamentation, in the transfer with agreeable modifications of old schemes of ornament to useful objects made to-day, especially of course to machine-made objects, and, in general, in plans to increase the efforts of designers and decorators of to-day to give to the useful objects of the life of to-day an interest and charm peculiarly their own.

The remarks made on the museum's collection of pictures are, in large part, particularly pertinent to the objects in the applied art group. It is, of course, very true that to look upon an ancient chest of wood, with elaborate carvings and with hinges, handles and locking devices cunningly wrought in iron, arouses a keen interest in the observer who is informed as to its age, its origin and history, its present great market value and the high esteem in which it is held by those who are careful students of such things. This emotion is accentuated if the observer learns that the chest is unique and that it has been acquired through the generosity of a wealthy collector of things akin to it.

It is clear that such of the emotions aroused by the sight of the

ancient chest as may lead to the use of it as the basis of construction or decoration in any field of production, are emotions which will be almost, if not quite, as fully aroused by a careful copy of it or a measured drawing of it, or a photograph of it, or of all of these presentments combined, as by the original itself. It is not the wonder, astonishment, pride of quasi possession or authorized admiration of the chest that will make it useful to the observer or to his fellows through the activities it will induce in him. The thing that makes the chest worth while is the use of it; and nearly all of this use can come as well from good pictorial presentments of the chest as from the chest itself.

Before leaving the chest and its decoration, it is proper to call attention to the fact that chest rarities in our museums, and kindred originals of old-time decorative effects in wood, metal and leather, have not as yet affected that modern descendant of the chest, the traveling trunk. If museums were the active agents in elevating the taste and the productive skill of their respective communities which they bravely try to think they are, they would have long since attempted, and attempted with no small success, to arouse such an interest in the skilful adornment of the common trunk as would have led to efforts to give it charm as well as strength and endurance. But, alas! under present museum conventions, trustees and directors and curators are amply content if they secure and expensively install an old, rare and costly chest, which attracts the gaze and evokes the wonder of the casual visitor and the envy of the occasional expert.

The collection of things made in the city which supports the museum consists of a selection, constantly changing through rejections and renewals. Of some of these an important exhibit is held each year. These annual exhibits of local products are not large, but are carefully selected and arranged and labeled with special reference to these points:—

1. Making the city known to itself, and especially to its young people.
2. Presenting one of the city's activities in an attractive, interesting and advertising manner to non-residents.
3. Encouraging improvements in manufacturing methods.
4. Presenting a modern industry in a comprehensive and enlightening manner to pupils in the schools.

The exhibit of New Jersey textiles made recently by the Newark museums, cost, including materials, labels, arrangement and work, less than \$800; it brought to the museum many gifts, and received 50,000 visits.

These local industries displays are quite frankly commercial. They illustrate each year the best the city can produce in the line selected. They are accompanied by or preceded by or followed by exhibits of goods in the same line from other countries and from other periods. The objects shown are selected, not with reference to their money value, but almost solely with reference to their suggestive value to local manufacturers, and their teaching value to old and young.

It is difficult to attach too much importance to the exploitation by a museum of the products of its own community. On the art side of its work a museum is supposed to be of help in improving the taste of its constituents, and in increasing their interest in, and their powers of discrimination concerning, the objects they daily see and use. Now, good taste and keen interest in the pots and pans of daily life do not emerge from the awed contemplation of unfamiliar objects enshrined in the cases of a public institution, as has just been illustrated in the case of the ancient chest and the great American trunk.

But, leaving aside for the present the subject of improvement in adaptation to purpose and of technical skill in production, it is

obvious that in almost every industry, from farming to the making of shoes and through the whole gamut of manufacturing, there are to be found a few workers who delight to add, to what they make or help to make, a very definite bit of what to them is beautification, adornment or art. It is this delight in a surplus of finish, a vague something beyond the needful, that is the very foundation and origin of all the arts of decoration in every field. This desire to add this surplus has been found in every country and in all times, from the savage and his paddle to the costumes on the avenues of our modern cities; and this desire has moved those possessed by it to definite and widely approved decorative accomplishment wherever and whenever their fellow-citizens have been interested in that decorative accomplishment and have been willing to pay reasonable sums to secure it.

The conclusion is that a museum of art, supported by a community, should encourage the movements toward the beautification of its products which that community discloses. A generous encouragement, one commensurate with the tremendous importance of the development of decorative power, would include far more than the exhibits of local industries already alluded to.

One form of such encouragement could be, for example, the careful selection and purchase, by a museum, of examples of what experts call the best and also of what experience has shown to be the most popular, of decorated objects of utility, made by manufacturers in the city which supports the museum. The purchases should include, in some cases, objects from producers in all parts of the country and if possible from foreign makers as well. These should be displayed with ancient originals or copies or pictures of originals of kindred objects, or objects bearing kindred decorations, and they should be accompanied by labels and leaflets suggesting how certain types of decoration have developed, and where and when; and why certain of those shown

in the work of to-day are likely to meet with popular approval for a long time; and why others promise to be only ephemeral fashions. More than this as to the "art" value of specific types of decoration it would be dangerous to say; but much could be said on other aspects of the subject that would be of interest to manufacturer, artisan, mechanic, salesman, advertiser and the buying public; would help them to a clearer conception of what makes decoration more or less enduring, and would lead them to see that the decoration made by their fellows, to-day, is the decoration that chiefly concerns them, and is the decoration which they can, by agreeable conscious effort, help to improve.

If it be said that such forms of museum activity as are here suggested would be very expensive, the reply can be made that the price paid for one rare painting, or one rare old bronze, or one year's excavations in Northern China would finance much of the work of encouraging and developing native decorations for several years. And to say this is not equivalent to saying that the painting, the sculpture and the excavations alluded to should be neglected. The zeal of the rich for the acquisition of the honorific in art will assure us that ample care and thought and money will be given to these things. But, the same prevailing fashion in the display of art zeal which condemns the rich to the acquisition of the old and rare and costly, almost completely inhibits their taking an interest in and contributing to the patronage of the designs and decorations of their own country and their own time. One of the newest museums of art has aptly illustrated the remarks just made. Its opening was celebrated by the display of a large collection of rare and costly objects, and of these objects was published a very beautiful illustrated catalogue. The articles and pictures this catalogue described were not, with perhaps a very few exceptions, made in the city of which the museum is a part, or in this country, and they did

not bear any direct relation to the daily life or the daily activities of any one in the museum's city, which is one of the most progressive, prosperous and intensely industrial in America.

This is typical. A museum of art is not thought of as the chief patron and encourager of the arts of its community: but as primarily a store-house of expensive curios. Of course the administrators of the typical art museum of to-day hope and believe that its rarities and curios, all genuine and therefore elevating to the community, can be used to stimulate an interest in great and good art. But building and contents are alike remote from the community's pots and pans and can affect the latter's advancement very slowly and very slightly.

In support of these statements I would call attention to the Proceedings of the Royal Society of Arts in London, October 28, 1918. The meeting of that date was given up to a discussion of "The Promotion of Industrial Art". Two schemes were submitted; one formulated by the Royal Society, the other by the Board of Trade. The two originated independently, but proved to be complementary and were expected to work in close coöperation. Hon. W. A. L. Fisher, President of the (National) Board of Education, was chairman. In opening the meeting he said, that the project under discussion had the approval of the Board of Education as well as of the Royal Society and the Board of Trade. Its purpose is, he said, "To lift our national industries on to an altogether higher line of esthetic achievement, by affording encouragement to our designers, to obtain first-hand acquaintance with the medium in which they work, and, by the formation of a permanent Exhibition of British Industrial Art, which shall not only offer a stimulus to our craftsmen and designers, but also enable us to obtain a conspectus of the state of contemporary art at any given period of time. One of the schemes before us to-day is a scheme for the establishment of

a British Institute of Industrial Art. The Board of Trade, in conjunction with the Board of Education, and with the advice of representative members of the Royal Society of Arts, the Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society, the Art Workers' Guild, the Design and Industries Association, and various persons and organizations connected with manufacture and commerce, have framed a scheme for a British Institute of Industrial Art, and it is proposed that this Institute should be incorporated, under the joint auspices of the Board of Trade, as the department dealing with industry, and of the Board of Education, as the authority controlling the Victoria and Albert Museum. The methods by which it is proposed that our objects should be achieved are first of all the establishment of a permanent Exhibition in London of modern British works selected as reaching a high standard of artistic craftsmanship and manufacture."

It is not necessary to quote further ; for I wish merely to show that the most important educational bodies in England are today of the opinion I am trying to set forth in this volume :— that under current methods museums do not fulfill one of their primary functions, if not the most important of all their functions, that of teaching. They are now, for the most part, mere collections, mere gazing museums, producing only slight effect on the development of industrial art, that is, on the application of decoration to useful objects. So entirely have museums of the old type failed to be of definite educational value that when it is asked in London how the "national industries can be lifted to a higher level of artistic achievement", the answer is found, not by turning to existing museums, but by proceeding to the erection of a new museum of the definitely useful, teaching type which I am here trying to describe.

The artisans and other members of the museum staff, who

mount birds, animals, insects, and other objects and make habitats and other groups, are in many cases so placed that visitors can see them at work. Visiting painters, designers and craftsmen are usually compelled to work in the exhibition rooms where they can be seen by all who are interested in their procedures. General museum workers are also presented as object lessons. To them are added occasional exhibits of bench workers, artisans and craftsmen, and of sculptors and modelers, painters, engravers, wood carvers, designers and artists in all fields, engaged for the specific purpose of being seen in the practice of their several callings. I am aware that our institution does not find it easy to discover persons in these many fields who are ready and willing to work under observation of a general public. But they can be found.

If the cost of doing the things of many kinds which I have noted is offered as an obstacle thereto, the answer is ready. Our new museum does not devote large sections of its annual income, sums ranging from \$10,000 to \$100,000, to the purchase of single objects like rare paintings. Notorious and costly rarities are given by the rich, or not acquired at all. The institution we are considering is trying to arouse an interest in all the refinements of life, and especially in the refining of the most common objects of daily use—the pots and pans of the commonalty already alluded to. This it is trying to do on what we call the art side of human activities. And it is equally interested in the task of arousing interest in the sciences, in the material history of the community—in the modest meaning of that phrase—and in all the industries by which we live and thrive.

Returning for a moment to the special displays of single objects or small groups of objects, which have been briefly alluded to, it should be noted that activity of this kind is all quite distinctly educational. It is not found difficult, indeed, to connect

some of it closely with the work of the schools and even to include it in the definitely required work of the curriculum, and to give teachers an opportunity to acquire merit in its supervision. In certain high school courses, in history, literature and art, for example, the observation and study of paintings, sculptures and architectural pictures, with the aid of proper leaflets, guidance by teachers and suggestions from museum assistants, can be made to form an essential part of the work of a given year or half year.

Add to the objects of these three kinds the many others that a general museum of the type I am describing,—well settled as it is in the habit of sending out for special service almost anything it possesses,—has gathered into its halls and store-rooms, and it is easy to see how our institute becomes an active ally of all the city's educational institutions.

It displays, for example, in rented rooms, in libraries, in welfare departments of great industrial establishments, in the rooms provided by institutional churches, in school houses and many other places, a series of models of the habitations of men; bird and animal habitat groups; charts and maps descriptive of the development of mankind; and like documents on climate, products and geology; and it adds to these some of its own workers and installers of museum material, and workers in certain fundamental crafts like pottery-making and weaving. By this last it is obviously suggested that our new institute uses not only its objects,—all save those that are in fact both rare and of definite historical value—but also its activities in extending its teaching power through branches and many other avenues of distribution to every part of the city and to all its citizens.

If it be said that a publicly supported art museum cannot commercialize itself by the acquisition and display of commodities currently offered for sale, I would first admit that the matter must be handled with common sense. Then I would reply

that all museums of art enter the field of commerce when they borrow and display, as all do, the products of painters, sculptors and art-and-craft workers. A painter works and wishes to sell his products. No one has yet shown us that he and his colleagues in sculpture and hand work are more noble, more sincere, more worthy of special privileges than are those who design and produce the output of our factories; or that they are, through the peculiar nature or quality of their productions, endued with any special sanctity which makes their desire to sell their goods exempt from the taint of commercialism. It is well to patronize our artists, commonly so called, to examine their wares and to buy them if they are good. Indeed, no small part of this book is devoted to an argument in favor of this very thing. But the argument also goes to show, and I think unanswerably, that a museum of art is under the same obligation to patronize the maker of pots and pans that it is to patronize the painter.

And to all this I would add the statement that commerce is not sinful. It exudes no virulent poison which is harmful to the elevated souls of art museum trustees, administrators and visitors.

This also should be noted, that even as I write these lines I receive notice of the second exhibit in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York of "Commercial" products. The taint of sordidness is not removed from these products by the fact that they are in some degree based on objects,—rare, old and costly objects—which the museum has long housed. The fact is, of course, that they never were tainted at all, and that if their presence in a museum can assist that museum in its proper task of improving our commercial products and of refining and broadening the taste of its community, then they are quite as much at home in the museum as is the rarest, oldest and costliest object it possesses.

As I write I receive also a notice of an exhibit of "Art in Everyday Life" to be held in the Buffalo Art Gallery. This museum has long been a stronghold of Fine Art; and it is significant of the changing view of the functions that museums are taking on, that here, at last, applied arts of many kinds are to be shown, and are to compete for prizes and are to be offered for sale! Perhaps the absence of the machine in the factors that produce the objects here to be shown is held to sanctify those objects and make them proper associates of old paintings and other fine art things. Yet surely not; for a loom is a machine, even though moved by the hand and so, on second thoughts, is a hammer! No, the useful arts, that is, useful things somewhat adorned, have come to the Buffalo gallery, and it cannot be long before there will come to the same place, and to every other active, useful museum, these same useful objects, made, and adorned as made, by mere machines for mere purposes of sale to persons who will merely use them, and enjoy them, and thank the manufacturers for making them.

Our museum contains many objects illustrating such fundamental industries, whether followed in the city or not, as have greatly influenced the development of civilization. These include products in clay, glass, wood, wool and other fibers, leather, metal and other materials and also foods and medicines.

They are shown to illustrate these among many other things:

1. The historic development of the industries which produce them; and the relations of those industries to the development of social conditions.
2. The processes by which such objects are made to-day, with the science and skill involved.
3. The art qualities found in such objects, in both past and present times.

In doing this last the collection exalts the maker of picture above the maker of mugs, only when the former shows more genius and skill than the latter. One of the wider purposes of our museum is to make life better worth living, not by adding luster to riches and creating pleasurable reactions in the avowedly aesthetic; but by encouraging all to discover possibilities of agreeable emotions in the contemplation of common things.

The objects in this group are in many cases the same as those in the groups described in discussing applied arts and things made in the city; and, as our description indicates, many of the objects found in all these groups are used for several purposes.

That part of our institute's work now under consideration has to do with the history and technique of industries. No museum can hope to be, by assembling machines to illustrate every step of productive processes, a complete object lesson in these topics. But the subject can be illuminated and made attractive by pictures of machines in several stages of development, by a few of the earliest types of machines used in fundamental industries and by examples of products of hand work, and of machines from those of the earliest to those of the latest type.

The habitat groups are usually rather small, and many of them are in miniature. They include birds, animals, insects, plants and human beings. A few selected ones are always on view and are well arranged to be shown to groups of school children. Many of the less important, less complicated and less expensive groups, small and easily moved, are placed in museum branches, in windows of stores and in branch libraries and houses as needed,—all in the manner described in the discussion of the use made of paintings and sculptures.

In a few of our largest and richest museums, habitat groups of full size and of the utmost accuracy will continue to be made and will furnish endless pleasure and much visual instruction to

thousands. But the more modest institutions, like the one we are projecting, will find amply sufficient for its purposes groups of modest dimensions. In many cases they may be very small. The majority of them are to be viewed from one side only, being in small cases with the background carried out in drawings and paintings. These are so constructed and cased that they can be easily transported.

In the consideration of the utility of all this work in the habitat field several questions arise, some of which it will be part of our institute's activities to try to answer.

For example, this is the era of pictures. The quantity of pictures presented every day to the eyes of the average person, old or young, is enormous, and increases constantly. Not only does the quantity increase, the quality steadily improves.

What are the effects of this increasing flood of pictures on the individual brain? Does it hasten brain development? Does it make easier the acquisition of knowledge, without lessening those powers of planning, adjusting and generalizing by which acquired knowledge is made of definite value to life? Does it tend to modify those habits of observation and analysis which are acquired through other mental activities than that of picture gazing? Does it make it necessary for us to change our current methods of education?

These and many other questions are waiting to be answered. If our institute of visual instruction can, while it pursues its work along the lines suggested by our schools, by our conventional museums and by the new museum methods which are being widely approved and are here and there put in practice;— if it can carry on work which will test rather definitely some of the effects of picture-using it may thereby add a little to our much-needed knowledge on this subject.

The picture assails us everywhere. It not only brings to us a

certain kind of knowledge of every aspect of nature and of every form of human life and activity, it is also producing for us representations, those of each day more nearly accurate than those of the day before, of products of human hands in every field, including the so-called field of art. Add to the picture the moving picture, and we have, awaiting our eyes and the visual centers of our brains, the very movements of nature herself, the operations set on foot by man, and man's daily activities. And again the question is, what are all these worth to us? Are they to prove altogether helpful or in some degree harmful? And again the answer is that no one knows. Nor does anyone know the values that may lie behind the use of the picture in museum work.

I am dwelling long on this subject of pictures because I wish to present, to museum workers, not only the unanswered questions already presented, but also certain others that lie in this same field of visual instruction.

Museums have thus far collected and displayed chiefly objects and not pictures of objects, save those pictures, and photographs thereof, which are possessed each of certain peculiar qualities given it by the brain and hand of one certain person, together with photographs of art objects as such. These objects, including those in the graphic arts field, are supposed to have a special value by reason of their power to arouse in the observer certain helpful reactions. These reactions are not easily defined, but are assumed to exist and to be of value. It is commonly supposed that they help the observer to understand life, to be more interested in the adornment of himself, his home and all things with which he comes in contact, and, especially, to be more susceptible to improvement in his tastes, to take a deeper interest in life and to patronize more generously those who give themselves to the task of sweetening human society. This is, I admit, a very

vague presentment of the assumed beneficial effect of a sight of an Egyptian tomb or of a Greek vase of approved excellence and unquestioned authenticity ; yet surely it is less vague than are most statements of the great and good influences of a gazing museum.

Let me make it clear that I do not deny that objects which time has tried, which have given pleasure to many, which continue to give pleasure to those of wide experience in the field of art, so called, and are by those same persons pronounced good, — that I do not deny that such objects are worthy of safe keeping, high esteem, and even of a certain veneration. But I do hold concerning them, that they should be looked upon, first of all, as marks of the possession of high skill, refinement of perception and of keen sensibility by those who made them, and only secondarily as aids to the development of like skill, like refinement of perception and like sensibility in those who gaze upon them. In a word, they are stigmata of civility and not the causes thereof. They should be studied and not worshipped. They should be preserved that they may help us, not that they may amaze and confound us. And, above all, we should study them with the purpose of learning from them, and in the hope that we may learn from them, not the secret of their making but the factors that united to bring them forth. Thus studying them, in relation to their time, their country, their purpose and the position which those who made them occupied in relation to the society in which they lived and of which they were an essential and fore-ordained part, we shall learn, even though not closely and completely, how we may so adjust our own social mechanism as to cause to come forth from among us also, men and women who can produce for us as great and helpful and pleasure-giving stigmata of our own civility as are the greatest art works the world has in its inheritance.

If these conclusions are sound, it follows that the thing needed to-day to provoke art among us is not so much great and richly-housed collections of rare and costly objects, as a widespread interest in the products of the men and women of our own times. It is to the products of living men and women, not to those of men and women long since dead, that we must look for the art of our day. And, that good things may come from these, we must help them, sympathize with them, understand the influences which our present social, economic and industrial order brings to bear upon them; and place their products frankly before us to be measured as things born of these days, and not of other times, other incentives, other conditions and other needs.

As to science collections in the visual instruction institute which I am outlining, many of these are made with special reference, first, to the science work in the schools, and next, to the interests of local groups of scientific men,— collectors, students and industrial experts. They are quite largely arranged as needed. Those which serve the schools are in large part collected and set up by young people, in accordance with instructions given by museum workers, skilled in such matters; and those serving groups of scientists are closely correlated with the work of these groups and are in many cases supplied by them.

Supplementing the collection of objects is a large collection of pictures in color, forming part of the picture collection mentioned later, carefully labeled and arranged, and including diagrams, charts and maps.

The general science collections cover in outline most of the subjects that are fully treated in large museums devoted to science only. Long series of rocks, minerals, insects, fish, birds and

animals are chiefly supplied, as already noted, by local scientific men. These are arranged and stored and made as easily accessible as those who contribute them may desire.

Short series of such things as building stone ; useful and commonly-used minerals and semi-precious stones used in the arts ; plants of medicinal and general economic value for the drugs, fibres, dyes, woods, fruits, etc., which they furnish ; insects notably harmful and beneficial,— these are made from duplicates of the science collection proper, are assembled on cards or in small boxes, are fully labeled and are accompanied with leaflet or pamphlet stories. These, like small groups of industrial products, local and other, are lent to schools in large numbers, and a few of them are always on display in the main building or branches for their own general interest and to call attention to the character of the whole lending collection.

The wide range of objects in this science field ; the great importance of the interest that may be aroused for them in young people ; the value to young people of practicing, even for a short time, the arts of the collector ; the help that young people can give in adding to the collections of their own local museum, and the increase in interest in that museum which is gained by one who makes even modest contributions to it,— all these make it plain that the young people of the community should be encouraged to collect, first for themselves, and next for their museum.

Several museums like the one I am projecting have been very successful in their attempts to discover among their visitors boys and girls who are interested in the museum itself or in groups of objects that the museum wishes to add to its scheme. The method of finding these young museum aids is usually that of giving to a person of modest scientific knowledge, of keen interest in natural history in general, of strong sympathy with

activities of curious and inquiring children and of experience in the art of teaching, the task of drawing them to the museum and then holding their interest in it. She watches the young visitors; explains things to them; asks questions; suggests that groups come to be instructed in the arts of collecting, arranging, mounting and labeling; takes with them a few short walks, and leads the more active spirits up to the idea of forming clubs of their own. Our institute finds this process slow and modest in results; but it also finds that out of it all comes a wider and deeper interest among young people, even among those who are not active members of any group; that a few of the more intensely interested collectors add no small sum of useful objects to the museum in the course of a year; and that the deeper interest aroused among the young extends itself quite naturally to the elders.

The proper source of all this work is of course the public schools. But a full and rigid curriculum leaves little time, as yet, for the discovery and development by teachers of the kinds of special interest in a few of their pupils which the junior museum we have been describing carries on. The institute, of course, keeps always in mind the school, the teacher, the course of study and the very strong influence and guidance which the school management can give in all work of this kind. Consequently it reports its efforts and its successes to the school authorities; on every possible occasion secures the sympathy and coöperation of teachers, and finds it possible to pass on to teachers much of the work which it initiates.

Our institute has a collection, already alluded to, of about a million pictures of paintings, sculptures, architecture and, chiefly, of decorated objects of daily use. It is classified by objects, schools, periods, etc. These are used by students in the building and are lent freely for home, studio, school and factory use.

They form one of the most valuable assets of the whole institution.

Purposely repeating myself, I ask again this question: "Whatever may be the purpose of the museum of the old type, or of the new, how is the method of attaining that purpose affected by the coming of the picture?" Surely those methods of adding to the richness and fullness of life and of enhancing its finer forms of activity, which were proper to a time when the picture was a thing painfully wrought by the hand of an engraver, and therefore imperfect as a presentation of the object pictured and slow and costly as well, cannot be entirely proper now, when we are supplied by scores of skilfully employed processes with countless pictures of all things under the heavens; and pictures, too, which every day approach more closely to precision in every detail and give us even the very movements of Nature herself.

But the coming of the picture is not the only thing which is making it necessary to change museum method. The development of industrial processes, the growth of transportation facilities and the increase of wealth have brought into being the modern city; and this modern city spreads before the eyes of everyone of its inhabitants, through its countless merchants, every conceivable kind of product. In their galleries and stores may be seen and, one may almost say, must be seen even by the casual shopper and passer-by, almost every kind of thing that the museum gathers, labels and displays. The merchant, moreover, permits a personal investigation of his gatherings, which extends even to a touch and a handling that are forbidden by the museum management. Add to these wares of the merchant the life of the streets, the moving picture of its endless and infinitely varied activities, the countless productive processes of the factories open to almost any interested visitor, and the wonderful background of architecture, and we of our cities have set

before us, and daily filling our vision, a museum-city far richer in every respect than any city-museum can ever be.

And it should be noted, in speaking of objects displayed by merchants and of those displayed by museums, that the latter are looked at largely as a matter of duty, and largely as a part of an ungrateful self-educational process; while the former are looked at as part of the very life of the day, as possible possessions, and are considered deeply as to quality and as to fitness for certain specific purposes. In a word, a visitor goes to a museum to gaze as a duty, with some hope of uplift; but to a store to enjoy, to compare and to study in sheer delight.

The picture, the moving picture, the modern city and the great and ever-changing exhibitions of merchants and manufacturers,—these have all come into our lives in vast quantity and infinite variety since the management methods of the conventional museum were developed and adopted. And to these factors should be added the public school.

What changes in museum management do these new social forces call for? It is no doubt as yet impossible to give to this question a definite answer. And it is because no definite answer is as yet possible, and because it is nevertheless so obvious that fundamental changes in museums are demanded by these new social factors, that I have ventured to prepare and publish this group of suggestions concerning the museum of the future. That the suggestions will all prove to be good it would be absurd to assume. But they and many other and better ones should be made, and studied and tested. Only by a constant testing of new methods and new schemes can the museum of the present justify its existence. A cursory glance at to-day's world of picture, print, shop, factory, school and city streets makes it seem almost needless.

One addition to museum work, of wide scope and almost

endless variety, seems to be clearly essential — though that it will make museums so definitely useful as to assure their continuance no one can say — and that addition is teaching; expert, carefully directed teaching. It is to this addition that this essay continuously and persistently returns. The objects the museum gathers and displays and also the new flood of pictures; the moving pictures; and shops, factories, schools, city streets and nature herself, all these may form part of the new museum's equipment.

To the mere sight of these things it seems clear there should be added instruction concerning them, by print, by more pictures, and by the skilful teacher. A brief examination of the recent reports, bulletins and other publications of our museums makes it clear that most of them have vaguely recognized the vast importance of this new factor, and are devoting to its application a very modest portion of their incomes. This essay is in a measure an appeal to museum promoters and managers to reduce materially the sums spent on the acquisition, installation and display of rare and curious and costly objects, and to spend the money thus saved on a series of carefully conducted, minutely reported and humbly studied experiments in museum teaching.

The main buildings of our public museum and our public library are both near the city's travel center, and are therefore near one another. The library of the museum is, in fact, a branch of the public library, from which it receives a daily delivery of books and other material needed in its work. It is quite full in all the subjects which the collections cover, for example, pedagogy, occupations, trades, fine arts, technique of museum management, making of collections and installation of exhibits. It has, of course, the museum literature of recent years, both books

and journals, including the late publications of scores of museums of all kinds. It includes also an ample collection of dictionaries and encyclopedias, and the best and latest standard books on art, pure and applied, and the sciences. The collection of a million pictures already alluded to, including many thousand photographs, supplements the books in countless ways. Museum libraries do not, with few exceptions, lend their books, or their photographs and other pictures. This custom reduces their value to a minimum. It would be difficult to find a point of time, in the life of any visitor who has shown a lively interest in some of the museum's collections, when a book or a package of pictures, or both, bearing on the visitor's line of special interest, would be as useful to him and as productive in him of thoughts and feelings useful to his community, as when he has just been examining the collections which attract him. Consequently, this is the occasion on which we are most eager to hand to him any book or picture he finds he wants to read or study. The non-lending habit in this field is a mere fashion, of course, with very little save precedent to support it.

Stereopticons and moving pictures are possessed in large numbers and of a character appropriate to the museum's work. Several rooms of various sizes can be adapted to their use. Slides, films and lanterns are used in branches and are lent for educational purposes. The use of the moving picture as an educational tool has not yet been sufficiently studied to give definite conclusions. Its possibilities are probably very great. The museum joins in the effort to discover how it can be used to the greatest advantage.

For visitors of a certain quality, those for example who understand what they hear better than what they read, and for certain large groups of visitors, the phonograph is used to give short explanatory talks. The machine, when set in motion, repeats

an interesting story concerning a special exhibit, and then automatically sets itself for a repetition. An attendant handles it in some cases, usually an attendant not sufficiently skilled to give the talk himself. In some cases the machine is set in motion by visitors by dropping in a coin, or a blank furnished at the desk for the purpose. Thus far this use of the phonograph is not more than a promising experiment. Mr. F. J. Urquhart of the Sunday Call of Newark was the first person to suggest this plan, to our knowledge. This was several years ago. Others have since had the same idea and it has been tested in a few cases.

The whole museum is in itself an institution for encouraging the use, not only of objects in its possession but also of the natural and man-made features of the city and its immediate surroundings.

It is the duty of certain members of the staff to know the city, and particularly to know of the persons, objects, processes, civic and educational enterprises, and of the social groups and the educational work, that may find the museum helpful; or that can be of service to those who come to the museum for advice, information or assistance. These members of the staff form a department of coöperation; rather, they see to it that the museum and city are always working together at all possible points.

It is the habit of the city to turn simultaneously to library and museum when information is wanted. A local railroad magnate or automobile manufacturer, asked by a board of trade or a Sunday school class to speak on transportation, naturally calls up the museum and requests a room for a few days, in which small models and pictures, slides etc., of carriages, ships, and the like may be placed; and then asks the library to send appropriate books and material on transportation to that room. He uses the

room and its contents for the hours it takes him to collect his data.

It is the custom of the museum to send to the parks of the neighborhood some of its moveable collections which illustrate the phenomena then and there visible. And the park managers send to the museum many specimens illustrating natural phenomena. All art, industry and science schools use the museum and its collections just so far as falls short of interfering with their more democratic use by the city's laymen. And their first impulse, when producing or acquiring anything capable of use in visual instruction, is to duplicate it or share it with the museum. These correlations tend to prevent unnecessary duplication of collections.

One department of the museum contains lists, pictures and reproductions of notable art, science and industrial features of the city, and visual information as to its political, religious, philanthropic and civic institutions. In architecture, mentioned only to illustrate the statement just made, much use is made of books, pictures and models; but far more use is made of the architecture of the city itself. This is studied, described, characterized and used as the basis of work, both in the school department and in the illumination of the general public.

Those in charge of the parks, public gardens and shade-trees of the city have helped to make the science, or the nature-study part of the museum's work, more effective in many ways.

They supply samples of wood and branches from trees of many kinds. These show bark, sections of wood, habits of branching, form of buds, and, in the proper season, the leaves, blossoms and fruit of so many trees and shrubs as the museum needs. In late winter they furnish branches of many kinds which are placed in water in the museum until they send out leaves or blossoms. In summer they permit the museum, under proper

restrictions, to gather flowers of all kinds and these, added to the wild flowers, form in the museum a procession of blooms and fruit.

In the larger parks they have erected, in consultation with representatives of the museum and the schools, several buildings which are adjuncts to both schools and museums. These buildings are used by the park's plant expert as centers for labeling trees, shrubs and flowers and for the work of fighting plant diseases and noxious insects. At certain specified hours will be found here during all the summer and on mild days in winter, a member of the park staff or a skilled teacher from the schools or the museum, ready to conduct a teacher and her class on a tour of the park, all as previously arranged. In the building, which is in part a small nature laboratory, is a lecture or study room holding about sixty persons, and a large room in which collections of objects, brought in by park authorities or by visiting groups under the former's specific directions, are sorted and discarded or arranged, mounted and labeled. The best examples are reserved for the permanent exhibit of the park's material, and others are taken to the museum for school work.

Of the work of these small, park-study-museums, much more could be said. It is enough, perhaps, to add that they have helped to give the nature study or science work of the schools for the first time a definite and substantial value.

Of other work growing out of this coöperation between schools, parks and museums, it is well to mention the small geographic forms,—rivers, falls, lakes, islands, etc., and illustrations of erosion, formation of plains, deltas, etc., made by the park authorities in the parks, under school and museum guidance; and also the opportunities which the parks offer for the study of the elements of geology.

The problem of coöperation between all schools and teachers,

the museum and all the staff of the parks management, has been recently solved by the employment of an expert in science teaching who has general supervision of the whole affair.

In addition to the work with that greatest of all museums, the people of the city, their products, and their daily activities, and the material part of the city itself, the department of coöperation is engaged in extending the museum's field. Artists, designers, manufacturers, sellers, exporters and importers, engineers, chemists and scientific groups and individuals are asked to give help in widening the museum's activities and in adding to its collections. The schools are studied with special care and every possible avenue of usefulness to them is sought. Other museums in the vicinity are asked to help.

The working force of the museum is made up of persons who like to do things and wish to learn how to do them better; that is, they are all student workers. Experts are not employed as experts, but as workers whose experience and knowledge enable them to tell some of their associates how some of the work they wish to do can best be done. Those statements merely suggest the general attitude which members of the staff are encouraged to hold toward one another and toward the museum's needs. For new members to the junior staff a simple course of reading, study, inspection and work is laid out, varying somewhat for each one.

The activities of the whole institution are divided into departments, under semi-independent heads or chiefs, only so far as the demands for easy and effective work make such division quite imperative. The department method of administration is very agreeable to most workers, and especially to those who through it gain, as heads, dominion over a certain field of work and authority over subordinates. This fact, and the fact that the "expert" is especially desirous of having his own special

field, in which he may supervise and direct,— both facts flowing from well-recognized tendencies in human nature,— make it almost imperative that departmentation be tolerated to some extent. But it divides a working force, as its very name indicates, into groups. These, very naturally, tend to hold themselves apart from one another and desire to establish between each other solid walls of distinction.

In place of this cleavage into groups by and through differences in work, in kinds of knowledge and expertness and in varieties of likings and feelings, the staff is directed chiefly by through-and-through supervision. Great care is taken to find for each worker the kind of work for which she is, by native bent and by training and experience, best fitted. Every effort is then made to keep clearly in each worker's mind the fact that all that she does is part of a common product;— the museum's output in influence for the community's happiness and profit. An expert is encouraged to make the most of what lies within his field, that he may produce a semi-detached product not as a witness to his skill and learning, but as an added somewhat to the whole museum's armamentum.

By repressing quasi-independent groups, and by guiding all work largely by through-and-through supervision we eliminate as far as possible the feeling that one's immediate task is an end in itself and not a means to a far more important end. At the same time we succeed in fair degree in leading the museum staff to look upon itself as a body of students without teachers, and not as groups of pupils each under a master. And the whole institution presents itself to the public as a collection of objects which a group of student-workers is trying so to administer as to make it accessible, enjoyable and useful.

The several units of the staff work together as learners. The teaching and the pupilage states of mind are inhibited as far as

this is humanly possible, and the inquiring visitor usually finds at once that he is addressing a learner, like himself, and not an adept, self-isolated by his consummate intellectual excellencies or an expert conspicuously and inhospitably hall-marked.

To the staff as learners are joined as closely and as frequently as possible teachers from the schools of the city, especially in the study of the art of visual instruction. My belief that little is yet known concerning this art has already been expressed. Here it is mentioned again only to call attention to the fact that every opportunity is taken to make experiments, to note results and to urge teachers to do the same, as they borrow and use in their school-rooms objects from the museum.

The work shops include the places in which museum work is done, from the receipt, examination, recording, photographing and cleaning and repairing of some ancient, rare, beautiful and costly gift like an early textile, to the making of a simple case to hold a few geological specimens for lending. The shops are not rooms, save for a few types of work; but spaces to which the public have access. Separated from workers only by railings, visitors can see the work that goes to the making of an active, teaching institution. Here boys and girls note how artisan, mechanic or craftsman treats the museum's rare material and brings it into form for use in visual instruction.

Child and man alike are somewhat moved to interest, appreciation, clear understanding and development of their powers, by reading of a thing or process; they are still more moved by seeing the actual thing or process and learning of it through the ear; still more by handling and hearing and asking questions and receiving replies; and most of all by trying, under skilful guidance, to produce the thing or to repeat the process.

The museum, therefore, is a workshop of education, in which

objects are handled, descriptions are given, questions are asked and answered, and, as far as possible, visitors are moved to attempt, chiefly in school or at home, to produce objects of interest to themselves or of instructional value to the community.

Many children in the city are led by what they read and hear and see, in school and museum, to make and install exhibits for museum and school use, from models of kites and bird-houses, to life histories of birds and insects. What they create is used in the museum itself, in its branches, in the schools, in coöperating museums, and especially in and by the state's central museum, which never has enough of the simple and less expensive exhibits of natural history in all its phases,—from harmful insects to forest preservation,—to meet the ever-increasing demand therefor from all over the state.

Branches and the lending of objects have already been discussed; but the great importance of these two lines of development and activity are so important as to make repetition thereon almost essential.

One central museum can be of slight benefit to all the people of a large city,—since not all can easily and quickly reach it;—unless it extends its work in the two ways already alluded to:—by lending objects and by establishing branch museums. Our museum, as repeatedly stated, lends its objects freely. Particularly does it make use, for lending purposes, of its vast collection of pictures. It lends also objects in the field of applied art, these being chiefly either inexpensive originals or inexpensive copies of rare originals; and it even lends paintings, casts of sculpture and bronzes to schools and individuals under proper conditions. Indeed, the loans range from a fossil, wanted by a lecturer to complete what he shows at a talk, to a doll, wanted by a dramatic club as a model for costume effects; from a vase

for a still life group, wanted by an invalid who paints in her bedroom, to an entire case illustrating textile history for the employees of a silk mill ; or to an entire hallful of pictures wanted by the museum of a neighboring village for its spring exhibition.

The branches are in some cases little more than rooms, like stores, fronting on the street, at the street level, in business parts of the city. Some are in buildings of their own. Others are in factories, stores, schools, settlements, clubs and churches. They are decorated and finished in accordance with the uses made of them. Some contain, at times, little more than a few chairs set before one or two paintings or sculptures, which are so placed and lighted that they can be seen, day or evening, with the maximum of pleasure and the minimum of fatigue. With these are very full labels, in large type, supplemented by descriptive leaflets which bring the objects described into direct relation with daily life and encourage thought and study. Some are distributing centers, with a museum assistant in charge who is able not only to discover the needs of teachers but also to assist borrowers in the art of using to the best advantage.

No one of the branches is all the time a show room, though any one of them may be little more than a show room, as indicated above, for a brief period now and again. Every branch aims to be a complete teaching museum, and is as far as possible fitted to the character of its neighborhood and to the degree of education and the occupations of its residents.

As our museum is itself a school, in which all members of the staff are both students and teachers,—having, as the latter, only such authority to teach as their learning and experience gives them, and, as the former, every incentive to learn without the compulsion of pupilhood,—it is plain that the opportunities for

studentship which may be offered to outsiders are limited only by space and the absorptive power of the whole organization. Student workers are admitted on examination. The examination tests applicants for habits of industry; for serious intent; for accuracy; for thorough grounding in such education as is found a necessary equipment for helpfulness in the several lines of museum work in which assistance is needed, from carpentry to archaeology; for definiteness of aim, and for manners and good repute.

Visiting students who come in for independent study are welcome up to the limit of space and the proper supervision of books and objects used.

The museum makes arrangements for lectures or class work by members of its staff; but only as such may be requested by groups of students who give reasonable assurance of definiteness of purpose, are confessedly of that quality of mind which finds it impossible to learn by studying, and are willing frankly to admit that they are in the pupil stage of their development. Of such classes a rigid system of records is kept, that the museum may be assured that the time its assistants give to teaching, in either the class or the lecture manner, is not wasted on mental sponges or on those temporarily possessed by a fad.

In a word, the museum is a place for students and workers,—rather for those who wish to work hard at studying. As such a place it may be called a school, in the usual sense of that word, of designing, of drawing, of art, of science, of museum method or any other subject, only as it is made so by those studying within its walls, or outside its walls with the help of loans from from its collections. These students form themselves into groups; certify the museum as to their seriousness and their fitness; ask for and receive members of the staff,—and even on occasion, persons who are not members,—as guides, fellow

students, student workers, or "professors", and proceed to go seriously at the acquisition of that for which they have united.

An explanation and an excuse, if they are needed, of the apparent formlessness of this manner of schooling within the museum are found in the ever-present and never-forgotten fact that the museum is the assistant to and the handmaiden of all the formal educational activity of the whole city. It is an "institute of visual instruction". This means that it is far more than a storehouse of objects which may be used in object teaching, for it is an object teaching school, itself. But, the city's educational activities, from the kindergartens through to the local university, are all of the conventional teacher and pupil type, of course. And the museum finds it, thus far, unwise to attempt to add to this huge body of class-room work,—to the improvement of which, by the use of its materials, it devotes much of its energies—by the development within itself of "courses", thus necessarily duplicating work which is being done in the schools.

Though the museum withholds itself from the field of formal instruction so far as its character as an institute of visual instruction permits, the very nature of its collections, and of the labels, leaflets, guides and handbooks that go with them, compel it to act continually as a teacher. The mere process of setting up an object to be looked at, giving it a label and putting it in a certain sequential relation with objects, is pedagogic; that is, it aims to interest and to instruct. The museum teaches, therefore, in its main building and wherever any of its objects go. But its work is not of the class-room. It gives talks or lectures, singly or in series, to groups of children or adults, with other than definite pedagogic aims always in mind. It seeks through them to gain a certain needed publicity or popularity; to discover by and through them its methods of installation and its notes and

labels are well fitted for their purposes, and to persuade teachers to use museum objects in class-room work by showing them some of the ways in which such objects can be used.

It is true that most museums are better equipped financially, by reason of limitations set on their incomes, for the purchase of rarities of high market value than they are for carrying on the kinds of work I have outlined. But this unfortunate condition is not permanent and in many museums is rapidly being removed. Trustees and donors begin to see that money which could be used for active work, with definite educational results in view, should not be surrendered to the purchase of very expensive objects, objects to which a few point with pride and on which a few gaze with that improper self-satisfaction which is bought at the cost of museum fatigue.

The phrase "improper self-satisfaction" requires explanation.

I have had ample opportunity to learn that one who criticizes any aspect of an institution whose general character is so well established in public opinion as is that of the conventional museum of art, is at once, by most persons, assumed to be critical of that institution in its entirety. If I venture to say that a public-supported museum should be of definite use to its community, and that by the mere display to a few random visitors of costly works of art in its galleries it is not of definite use, I am at once charged with saying that no community should make for itself a collection of [the world's art treasures. This manner of condemnation and of summary dismissal of the innovator is universal and inevitable. But it is, in fact, as unjust and unintelligent an opinion as is that which leads one to call him a blasphemer who speaks disrespectfully of the architecture of a cathedral. The fact is that I believe that a community,—and by that word I mean any fairly prosperous town or city in this country,—can well afford to collect, and ought to collect, beautiful objects, far

more of them and far more expensive ones than any city has yet gathered for itself; it ought to house them permanently, beautifully, and in such a manner as to keep them from all possible harm. Every town and every city almost without exception can afford to do this, and, as I said, ought to do this. But when it does this it ought clearly to understand precisely what it is doing; and if it does not thus clearly understand what it is doing then it ought to be told, and the persons whose peculiar duty it is thus to inform it are, not lay preachers of museum gospel, like myself, but museum persons, museum workers, and experts in the art and science of museum management. The thing a city is doing when it thus collects beautiful things and beautifully and carefully houses them is — just that and nothing more. It is putting the rich products of its purchasing power into a storage warehouse. It is not making those products of effective use, save to a very small degree, in adding to the pleasure, the general enlightenment, the physical well-being and the industrial power of its citizens.

If this is denied, let us look for a moment at the facts. Our richest museums of the general storage warehouse type, receive in a year a total of visits equal to, say, ten per cent of the permanent population of their respective cities. Subtract from this total the visits of transients and all visits after the first of residents, and there remains, of the visits of residents for instruction, enlightenment and inspiration a few thousands only. Of these thousands a few hundred attend one or more lectures, which are to them in most cases mere titillations of their intellects via their auditory centers, having no relation to their mental development or to their trades, vocations or professions. And of these few thousands a still smaller number are conducted in groups through the museum and thus acquire a few fragments of information concerning a few exhibits.

The buildings and collections forming the material presentations of these museums are of slight cost relatively to the wealth of their respective cities; but of high cost when considered as the underlying planks or the foundations of educational institutions, and as such planks their product in definite influence on their respective communities is, as shown by figures I have roughly estimated, most lamentably slight. In fact they are so slight as to make seem quite reasonable the statement I have elsewhere made to the effect that no other public educational institutions give so little return for the money spent on them as do art museums.

Now, we desire beauty. We are by nature as artistic as was ever any people. We wish to learn. We wish all things that we produce to have that indefinable somewhat which would give them unmistakable and permanent charm. And to us come the wealthy, and our mayors, and our aldermen, and tell us that they have noted our desire for the beautification of life, and that they will help us to achieve it. Therefore, they build us a temple of art in a remote corner, and put into its stately but wearisome halls long files of costly products of the past; and make it all so pretentious, so cold and so unsympathetic that we do not visit it at all! And then by the power of wealth, of high cost, of great age and of expertness, they so obfuscate us that we believe that what we see in their temple is very art of very art, and that it is to be seen nowhere else; and that our efforts to make beautiful our own modest homes are pitiful and laughable.

Consider, now, a museum's possibilities in promoting the quest for that form of broadening our daily life which we call beautification.

In its city are thousands of shops, factories, stores and homes. In these are hundreds and thousands of workers; and do not forget that those who manage and those who labor in the homes

are as truly workers as are those in the factories. Assume for a moment that the wealthy citizens and the governors of the city are willing and eager to spend their own and the public's funds in an effort to make more agreeable, more beautiful, more enduringly satisfying, the products of the factories and the tools of domestic life. Thereupon, in the center of the city, they set up what they are pleased to call a museum, and they place in this museum, as workers, a group of men and women who are sensitive to the appeal of beauty; are persistent students of beauty, down to its most modest appearance in the decoration of a broom handle; are skilled in the arts of presentation and appeal, and believe that most of their fellows are glad to learn, but that they learn best who are least conscious of being taught. This staff of workers surveys the city and its life and industries. It discovers what it produces and what it uses; and the things produced by it and the things used by it are by the museum staff gathered in typical examples into the museum. By these are placed examples, from other cities and other times, of kindred things, sometimes originals, sometimes copies,—and often merely pictures of them. It arranges these for display and labels them freely and describes them in leaflets, and, on occasion, sends groups of them to schools, factories and storerooms in all parts of the city. And then it says to the citizens, "Come and see. We think you will find that, as a result of such a study and daily use of what we can show you in your museum or as we can help you to make in your homes and factories, your products will sell better and at higher prices, your homes will give you more pleasure, your knowledge of and sympathy with the peoples of other lands and other times will be broader and deeper, and you will get more enjoyment out of every working hour."

And that, briefly, is the text upon which I have tried to construct this little volume.



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